Vietnam Courier

A MONTHLY REVIEW No. 12 — 1987

- A New Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam
- The Press and Renovation
- 40 Years Ago, A Historic Campaign
- Greetings to Czechoslovak Culture

PROBLEMS OF RENOVATION

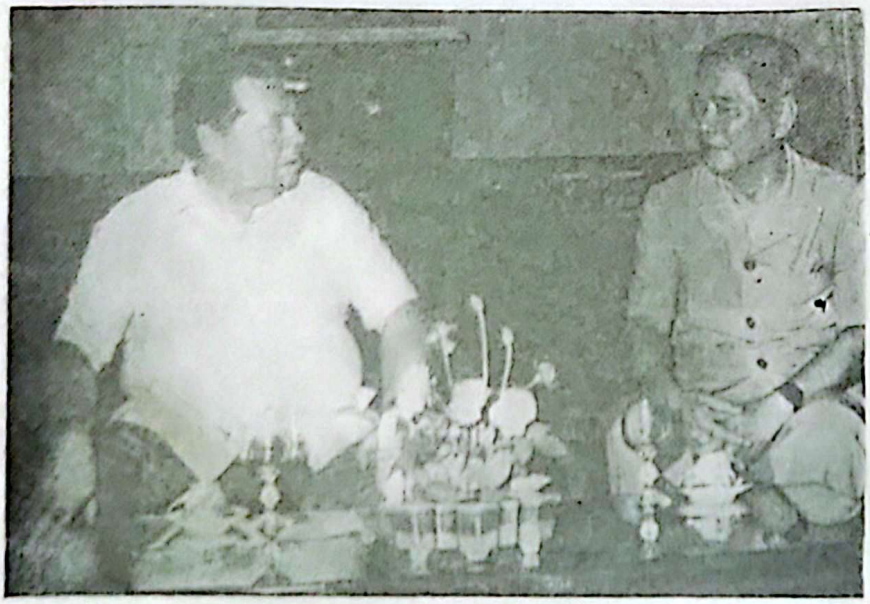
DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES

- *Pham Hung, Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers, receiving L.A. Paramonov, Department Head of the Soviet State Planning Commission. (14 September 1987).*

Photo: MINH DIEN

- *Signing of the minutes of the 10th Conference of the Committee for Economic Cooperation between Vietnam and Cuba in Hanoi. (22 September 1987).*

Photo: MINH DAO



- *CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh receiving L.A. Voronin, member of the CPSU Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and Head of the Soviet State Committee for Material and Technical Supply.*

Photo: XUAN LAM

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION THE BEACON OF OUR TIMES

Acting upon President Ho Chi Minh's behest, Vietnamese social-science workers have undertaken many studies of the October Revolution, the greatest revolution ever to have happened on earth.

Three scientific research organs: the Marx-Lenin Institute under the Party Central Committee, the Nguyen Ai Quoc Institute (the Higher Party School), and the Vietnam Social Sciences Committee, jointly organized in Hanoi on 5 and 6 October 1987 a symposium on the October Revolution.

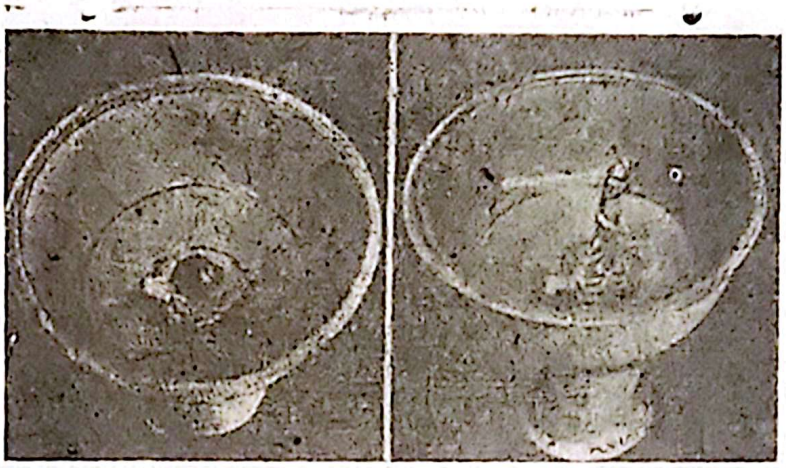
It was attended by Party and State leaders, professors from scientific institutes and universities, and hundreds of researchers in philosophy, economics, art and literature, and military science. Over 50 papers were presented analysing the great significance of the October Revolution and its profound influence on the life of mankind, and reviewing the lessons drawn from it by the CPSU and the Soviet people over the last 70 years, which prove useful to both the Soviet Union and Vietnam.

Many papers devoted long passages to *perestroika*, the restructuring now underway in the Soviet Union as well as to the renovation being undertaken in Vietnam in the light of V.I. Lenin's theses and the lessons of the October Revolution.

Attending the conference were also scientific workers of the Higher Party Schools of the Soviet Union, the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia. On this occasion a collection of 16 papers by well-known authors has been issued by the Theoretical Information Publishing House.

VINH LONG

A 15th CENTURY CERAMIC ARTIFACT



The 15th-century high-stemmed cup before and after being filled with wine.

Photo: LE VUONG

The Fine Arts Museum has recently been informed of the discovery of a rare ceramic item: a high-stemmed cup (*tuoc* in Vietnamese) used to offer rice wine at religious ceremonies (see photo). It measures ten centimetres high, and nine-cm across at the mouth, and is thought by experts to have been made in the time of the Le dynasty (15th century).

When the cup is empty, one sees a tortoise in relief at the bottom. But when wine is poured into it, from a hole on the back of the tortoise there appears a four-cm high statuette of a deity clad in a ceremonial robe with his hands joined and laid on his stomach. As the cup is emptied the deity gradually disappears into the hole. The statuette is a kind of float, hollow and sealed. It is hidden in the hollow stem of the cup. When the cup is filled with wine, it is lifted out of it.

The dating of the cup is based on examination of its shape, enamel, clay and an estimate of the temperature at which it was baked and also on a comparison with *Le* ceramics.

The tortoise and the statuette may be related to the legend of *Kim Quy*, the Golden Tortoise, which appeared in various episodes of our history and helped in the struggle of our people against foreign aggressions.

NGUYEN BICH

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The preparatory work for this issue was completed on 15 October 1987.

Front cover: Students of the Vietnam Ballet School.

Photo: CAO VIET HOA

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THRIFT: A STATE POLICY

A decision issued on 15 September 1987 by the Council of Ministers ordered a series of measures against waste, which is harming our national economy:

In production and trading, it recommends a 5 to 10 percent cut of the materials used.

In capital construction, it is forbidden to increase investment from any source. Besides, regarding the projects being built, a choice should be made to suit the parts of project to the funds available. The administrative personnel (including the management apparatus) is to be cut down by from 20 to 30%, who will be shifted to production and service activities. Intermediary echelons in all units shall be disbanded and no more labour shall be recruited from outside State enterprises. Other measures will be taken to reduce the wage fund, now swollen out of all proportions.

In energy consumption a reduction of 20—30% will be operated in the supply of fuel to administrative services (mainly for their vehicles). The supply of electricity to civilian needs will be reduced for the benefit of the production sector.

Housing is to be rationally and fairly distributed. Priority is given to State employees. Unused government guest-houses, villas and rest-homes are to be handed over to the tourist department or welfare services.

Fewer conferences and meetings are to be held. Prior to a conference, careful preparations must be made to save time, and no banquet is to be organized. A temporary stop is to be put to the purchase of new furniture and equipment for Party and government offices.

NGOC LAN

A NEW SURGICAL ACHIEVEMENT AT THE OLOF PALME PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

Tran Xuan Nga and her mother.
Photo: QUANG DUONG

Surgeons at the Olof Palme Pediatric Hospital in Hanoi have successfully dealt with a complicated case. The patient was Tran Xuan Nga, a two-day-old new-born of Phu Luong commune, Phu Binh district, Bac Thai province. It was found that the baby could not take food. Examinations revealed that its gullet stuck to its windpipe over two centimetres. The baby not only could not take food but phlegm and saliva spilt over from the oesophagus into the trachea, causing inflammation of the bronchi. Failing an urgent surgical operation, the baby would die within four days.

Under the guidance of Professor Nguyen Xuan Thu, vice-director of the hospital, a team of surgeons rapidly worked out a plan: first to cup and separate the gullet from the windpipe; and then stop the hole in the windpipe; and finally link together the two sections of the oesophagus. The operation was performed by doctor Nguyen Xuan Thu personally.

The difficulty was compounded by the tender age of the patient and the lack of technical facilities. After the operation the baby was assisted by a respirator until it was able to breathe normally one day later. A check-up was made seven months after the operation. Now the baby has completely recovered and is developing normally.

This is the first successful surgical operation performed in Vietnam on a baby with a congenital malformation of that part of the body.

DAO QUANG THEP

GREY–SHRIMP BREEDING CENTRE

Over the last few years, in all three sectors of our economy (state, collective, and family) attention has been paid to the rearing of grey shrimps in the Mekong delta, with a view to export. This fresh-water shrimp weighs 200-300 and even 500 grammes apiece and fetches good prices on the international market.

In late June this year, a centre for research on and breeding of this aquatic species was inaugurated at Vung Tau — Con Dao. Its building began in October 1985 as part of a project sponsored by the Mekong River Provisional Committee, with an initial investment of 40 million *dong* and a grant of one million dollars by the Australian Government.

This centre ranks among up-to-date establishments of this kind in Asia and in the world. It comprises 12 sections, all fitted with modern equipment, and undertakes two production processes: one for fostering fry, equipped with a closed-circuit water circulation system supplied by a French firm, and a feed-processing system installed by the Belgian Artemia centre. The Vung Tau centre, 3.6 hectares in area, is divided into two sectors: one for breeding fry and producing Artemia feed (five ponds); the other for raising adult shrimps for the market (seven ponds).

The Centre studies and applies scientific progress achieved in its field of activity, trains technical workers, and supplies fry (16, 18 and up to 25 million fry each year) to the provinces in the Mekong delta.

After one month's activity, the centre had produced over one million fry.

KIEN AN

RESOLUTION OF THE CPV POLITICAL BUREAU ON THE CAMPAIGN TO PURIFY PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE STATE APPARATUS AND INCREASE THEIR FIGHTING STRENGTH AND TO MAKE FOR HEALTHY SOCIAL RELATIONS

Editor's Note: On 12 September last, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued a resolution on « the campaign to purify Party organizations and the State apparatus and increase their fighting strength, and to make for healthy social relations ». This was a political event of special importance in Vietnam at present.

The resolution consists of five parts: 1/ The present situation and its causes; 2/ Character, requirements and guidelines of the campaign; 3/ Content of the campaign; 4/ Measures to be taken and actions to be completed by the end of 1988; 5/ How to organize and guide the movement.

Below are the first three parts of the resolution.

I. Situation and Causes

During a long, hard and arduo is process of revolutionary struggle, our Party, upholding the shining example of revolutionary virtues set by Uncle Ho, has trained successive generations of cadres and Party members, most of whom have shown a firm political stand, revolutionary virtues and loyalty to the Homeland, the Party and the people. With that body of militants and the masses of toilers tempered in the revolutionary struggle, our people have recorded glorious successes. Our Party has gained greater maturity in its leadership of the revolution.

However, over the past ten years and more, there have appeared among cadres, Party members and State employees, and in social life in general, increasingly serious negative phenomena, most frequently manifested in the following:

— A decline in militancy and in the sense of responsibility; conservatism and inertia; a diminished sense of organization and discipline.

— Theft of socialist property in various ways, embezzlement, corruption, smuggling, speculation, depravation, debauchery, abuse of power, grabbing of privileges and prerogatives.

— Bureaucratism, arrogance, and bullying of the people.

These ever more serious negative phenomena have had disastrous consequences, spoiling people's character, causing great damage to State and collective property, eroding ethical values, weakening the fighting strength of Party organizations and the managerial effectiveness of the State, reducing faith in Party leadership and the superiority of our system, creating serious obstacles to the successful implementation of the Resolution of the Sixth National Congress of the Party, and opening loopholes through which enemy sabotage can operate.

There are subjective and objec causes to this situation. Objective we are now in the initial stage the period of transition to soci ism, in which small-scale prod tion is still widespread, no socialist economic sectors will lin over a fairly long time, vestiges old ideologies still make their effe heavily felt, and the enemy w carry out wicked schemes of sab tage.

However, our Party lays stre on the following subjective causes

— Protracted maintenance of th system of bureaucratic centralize management based on State subs dies; delay in setting right th errors committed in the socio-ec nomic field and in Party and Sta guidance over the implementatio of policies.

— Many shortcomings in th management and employment cadres and Party members. Ed cation in the communist ideal an revolutionary virtues has be made light of. The Party Cons tution and State laws have been strictly observed.

— Cadres and Party membe have neglected their moral impro ment; there has been an upsur of individualism; senior cadre including some high-ranking one have not shown exemplary co duct.

II. Character, Requirements and Guidelines of the Campaign

1. This is a great campaign launched by the Party and State. It is to span the whole term of the

Sixth Party Congress and is aimed at implementing its resolution; promoting renovation; creating favourable conditions for doing away with the subsidy-based bureaucratic centralized system of management; shifting to socialist economic accounting and enterprise, and stabilizing the socio-economic situation in all respects. This campaign is to be a real ideological struggle, one between socialist ideology and individualism, between active renovation on the one hand and conservatism and inertia on the other; it is closely related to the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and to the struggle against the enemy's multifaceted war of sabotage.

2. Requirements of the Campaign:

a/ Building up a working-class stand and viewpoint and grasping the renovating spirit of the resolution of the Party Congress; heightening one's consciousness of the communist ideal, revolutionary enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, spirit of serving the people, sense of organization and discipline; inculcating the revolutionary virtues taught by President Ho Chi Minh namely "industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total devotion to the public interest and complete selflessness"; and improving one's educational standards in order to be equal to the new tasks.

b/ Fighting all negative phenomena such as the slackening of combativeness and sense of responsibility; conservatism and inertia; failure to speak and act in conformity with the Sixth Congress Resolution; theft of socialist property, bribery, speculation, smuggling, depravation, abuse of power; grabbing prerogatives and privileges; bureaucratism, arrogance, aloofness from the masses, retaliation against one's critics and bullying the masses. Depraved and degenerate elements and those engaged in illicit trafficking are to be resolutely expelled from Party and State organs and seriously punished.

c/ Following the above actions, the campaign will help strengthen the Party's organization and militancy, increase the managerial effectiveness of the State apparatus, bring into full play the working people's right to collective mastery, and promote the fulfilment of all socio-economic tasks and targets set by the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress.

The keynote of the campaign is to grasp President Ho Chi Minh's teaching regarding the formation of the new man and the building of the socialist way of life; to protect socialist prpperty; to restore discipline within the Party, the State apparatus and in society at large.

3/ Guidelines for the Campaign:

— To closely coordinate it with the fulfilment of political tasks; closely link the drive within Party and State organs with that in society at large.

— To coordinate constant self-criticism and criticism among cadres and Party members with encouragement to the masses to make suggestions about Party building and State administration in this spirit: "believe in the people, rely on the people, regard the people as the root"; and with investigation and control by organs of inspection and supervision ...

— To coordinate the education (of wrongdoers) within Party organizations with publicizing (their wrongdoings) in the mass media... make use of public opinion to fight negative phenomena and support good people and good deeds. It is strictly forbidden on the one hand to try to suppress criticism and on the other hand to misuse criticism for slander and distortion.

— To mete out due punishment to those guilty of errors and shortcomings, whatever position they are holding. Differentiate between those who intentionally commit offences for the sake of their personal interests and those who have ventured into active renovation, who have dared to think and to act in the common interest. Deal seriously with all cases from the higher to the lower echelons, within and without the Party, with special attention paid to key cadres.

— There should be close, resolute and careful leadership; words should be matched with deeds, and half-hearted measures avoided; the focus should be on key issues.

III. Content of the Campaign

The aim of the campaign is threefold: to purify Party organizations and increase their fighting strength; to purify the State apparatus and increase its effectiveness; to make for healthy social relations and to realize social justice.

The above-mentioned points are closely related and interact on each other. The campaign is to be conducted simultaneously within the Party and State organs and in society at large, but special attention must be paid to the campaign in the Party and State organs.

1. In order to purify Party organizations and State organs and increase their fighting strength and effectiveness, first of all we must expel from them all depraved and degenerate elements. We should change those cadres who are not resolved to carry out reforms in the spirit of the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress, and those who are not equal to their tasks. We should mete out due punishment to those

(Continued on page 10)

PRESERVING THE COMMUNIST QUALITIES

DO MUOI

Political Bureau member and Secretary of the CPV Central Committee

Editor's Note: The October issue of *Tap Chi Cong San* (Communist Review) published an article by Do Muoi, Political Bureau member and Secretary of the CPV Central Committee, entitled "Heighten the moral qualities of Party cadres and members, preserve the purity and increase the combativeness of the Party".

Following are some excerpts. The title is ours.

[...]

Thanks to education and training by Uncle Ho and the Party, and to their own sustained efforts for self-improvement in revolutionary struggle, the overwhelming majority of our Party cadres and members have shown a firm political stand and loyalty to the Party, the motherland and socialism. They have evinced great moral qualities and a healthy lifeway and maintained close ties with the working class and the people.

As a result, our Party has enjoyed great prestige among the people and won their confidence and support. It has led them to great and glorious victories. In the present situation when our country is meeting with many difficulties and negative phenomena are still frequent in society, the majority of Party cadres and members have preserved their confidence in Party leadership and have consciously striven to preserve their moral qualities, militancy and sense of responsibility. They have faced difficulties with fortitude and tried to overcome them, persevering in their healthy lifeway and accomplishing all tasks assigned to them in production, combat, and other work. It can be said that good moral qualities remain the basic aspect, the nature, of Party cadres and Party members. This is a positive factor for safeguarding the leading role of our Party. It stems from the fine traditions of the nation, from the ideological education and organisational work of the Party, from the enlightenment provided by Marxism-Leninism and patriotism, and also from the efforts for self-improvement by cadres and Party members. This is something we can take pride in, and which should be strongly asserted and developed.

However, in recent years, in the new historical context and in face of new, bitter trials, not a few Party cadres and members have failed to preserve their revolutionary virtues and consequently are no longer worthy of being members of the Communist Party. Negative phenomena in the Party, in the State apparatus, and in society tend to increase in number and also in gravity. Although our Party and our State have taken quite a few measures and used different methods to combat negative phenomena, to educate and enhance the moral qualities of Party cadres and members (such as the campaigns to heighten the moral qualities of Party members and to remove undeserving ones from the Party; the issuance of Party membership cards after control of the qualifications of Party members, the conduct of criticism and self-criticism in the spirit of Directive No. 79 of the Secretariat of the Central Committee) and although we have taken disciplinary measures against many Party cadres and members and have expelled from the Party hundreds of thousands of them, *we have in the main failed to curb negative phenomena in the Party and to heighten the qualities of Party members.* In the Party there have remained not a few members who have degenerated morally; in the State apparatus there have remained many corrupt elements; and in society there have remained many negative phenomena. That is an abnormal situation.

The most widespread manifestations of such phenomena at present are the following:

— Declining militancy and diminishing revolutionary ardour; lessening of the sense of responsibility; conservatism and inertia; lax discipline; contravening Party guidelines and policies; violations of Party and State rules and regulations.

— Negative attitude in labour and combat; lack of zeal; laziness and idleness; bungling and neglect; earning one's income not from labour but from illegal practices; reluctance to go to fight or work in distant places.

— Negative attitude toward socialist property: not only failing to respect and protect the property of the State and the collective; not only causing waste and losses; but even more seriously, trying by various means to steal; failing to respect socialist principles in distribution and to uphold social justice; trying to get remuneration not commensurate with one's contributions; abuse of power to grab privileges and prerogatives; squandering public money on banqueting, and on gifts to superiors, friends and relatives. Theft of public property is the most serious of such negative phenomena.

— Smuggling, speculation, and bribe-taking have become fairly widespread.

— Bureaucratism, high-handedness, bullying people, and violations of the right of the masses to mastery are also rampant.

— Imitation of the lifeway of the feudalists, bourgeois and neo-colonialists; practice of superstitions.

Those negative phenomena have spread and in some places have affected whole collectives, including Party and State organs, in all branches of activity and all localities, and getting down to the grassroots. They have combined with, and given support to, *negative phenomena in society*. Such phenomena have taken on a fairly serious *social and political character* and the measures commonly taken by the proletarian dictatorship are not effective enough against them. Facts have shown that no one is immune to them, that they "attack" everyone regardless of his position. If a person does not stand firm, he will fall. Some high-ranking cadres and veteran Party members have been fatally hit by "sugar-coated bullets". Some cases are really tragic ones. It can be said that the "casualties" we have suffered in the past ten years are even higher than those endured in the fight against foreign aggressors.

[...]

Objectively speaking, the above-mentioned negative phenomena spring from the fact that our country is only in the first stage of the period of transition to socialism, when the old economic bases have not been completely transformed, when the economic sector marked by exploitation has not been completely abolished, when vestiges of the old ideologies and lifeways still exert a strong influence, and when the enemy is still hatching perfidious schemes against us. On the subjective plane, however, we have committed many mistakes and errors in our socio-economic policies, in the management of our economy, our cadres and of society at large, and in providing operational guidance. Party committees at various echelons still make light of the ideological and moral education of cadres and Party members while laying unilateral emphasis on competence and material incentives, regarding moral failings as trivial questions of character, and failing to resolutely check them in time. Lax control is exerted over Party cadres and members, especially those in responsible positions. Party discipline has been neither strictly nor impartially enforced, and is often applied only leniently to leading cadres. The law of the State of proletarian dictatorship is not properly observed. A number of cadres in high positions do not behave in exemplary fashion, especially with regard to their ethical conduct and their lifeway, and their deeds often do not match their words. Degenerate elements in State organs have taken advantage of the loopholes and weaknesses in our managerial work. They corrupt many cadres, Party members, government employees, collude with, and protect illicit traffickers, speculators, smugglers and other criminal elements in order to steal State property and cause disturbances in our ranks.

The Sixth Party Congress severely criticized those negative phenomena, pointed to their origins, and decided to launch a campaign to purify the Party and the State apparatus, and make for healthy social relations. The Congress stressed that along with heightening the capabilities and improving the work style of Party cadres and members, it is necessary *to give a vigorous fillip to their revolutionary qualities*. This heightening of the revolutionary qualities of Party cadres and members and of the entire people is an urgent requirement and a crucial task of our ideological work.

In execution of the Resolution of the Congress, the Political Bureau recently issued a resolution launching *a campaign to "purify and increase the combativeness of Party organisations, purify and heighten the managerial efficiency of the State apparatus, repel and eliminate negative phenomena, make for healthy social relations and achieve social justice"* (see full text of the resolution in this issue).

To increase the moral qualities of Party members and preserve the purity of the Party is *the fundamental and crucial content* of this campaign. This is to be *an arduous and complex revolutionary struggle* in ideology, organisation, and manner and style of work, a struggle between *renovation* along the line of the Sixth Party Congress on the one hand and conservatism and inertia on the other, between socialist economic accounting on the one hand and bureaucratism and dependence on government subsidies on the other. It is closely related to the struggle between the "two paths" and the struggle against the multifaceted war of sabotage of the enemy. It requires the well-coordinated combination of many active measures — education, administrative, economic, organisational and supervisory — and is bound up with the implementation of the Resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Party and related resolutions of the Central Committee.

[...]

Considering education to be the basic measure, we must encourage Party cadres and members to carry out criticism and self-criticism and to correct their mistakes. *Leading cadres must set good examples* in this respect. The higher their positions, the more exemplary they must be. They must be very severe toward themselves and actively combat individualism. The exemplary conduct of leading cadres at all levels and the resolve of Party committees at higher levels must be clearly demonstrated in this campaign: this is a very important factor which will ensure its success. The Party rank-and-file and whole society will move only when leading cadres have moved. The lower levels will budge only when the higher levels have stirred. If leading cadres do not set good examples, if the higher Party levels do not show that they "mean business" and if their deeds do not match their words, then we cannot hope to educate or convince anyone and finally no change would be effected. The masses would not be impressed and their confidence in the leadership would not be strengthened.

Along with education we must closely examine the record of Party cadres and members and take a firm attitude in applying sanctions against all violations of the Party statute and State laws. Party

(Continued on page 10)

THE PARTY AND THE MEDIA'S STRUGGLE AGAINST NEGATIVE PHENOMENA

VU KIEN

On 21 September 1987, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued a directive on "Strengthening Party leadership with a view to a better use of the press in the struggle against negative phenomena". The directive attracted great interest and was actively discussed.

In theory, the socialist press under the Communist Party's leadership has three closely connected functions: it serves as a collective propagandist, agitator and organizer. Acting upon this motto: "Let the people know, discuss, act and control", over the past year, the Vietnamese press has vigorously served the renovation drive which formally began with the historic resolution adopted by the Sixth Party Congress held in December 1986. This renovation is to encompass every field of social life. It requires a vigorous struggle against outdated concepts, sluggishness in workstyle and lifeway and especially against the negative phenomena which have caused great harm to our society for many years. One cannot renovate if one does not severely criticize and root out those social evils, the violations of socialist legality, of democratic centralism — the principle of organization of the Communist Party — and of socialist morals. Before the Sixth Party Congress, a great many errors and even evils which should have been exposed and brought to trial were only dealt with "behind closed doors" by a few people. Far from doing any good, this remedy only aggravated the disease. The directive of the Party Secretariat begins with an assessment of press activities in the common effort by the Party and the people for renovation:

"Implementing the Resolution adopted by the Sixth Party Congress, many newspapers and radio stations in the Capital and in the provinces have energetically struggled against negative phenomena, mobilizing cadres, Party members, soldiers and the people at large, initially imparting confidence to the masses, and causing Party organizations and State organs to deal more rapidly and more efficaciously with a number of negative phenomena. Thanks to this, a number of newspapers and radio stations have improved their work in both content and form, and have strengthened their ties with the public."

Indeed, while preparations were being made for the Sixth Party Congress, the Vietnamese press had mobilized public opinion step by step with a view to exposing the errors committed first of all in economic leadership. By "facing the truth and speaking the truth", the Sixth Congress gave the press greater momentum. Besides the maturing of internal factors, there was the impact of democratization in the Soviet Union since the 27th CPSU Congress (early 1986) and the great example of openness set by the Soviet press. The trend for renovation in the socialist community, starting from the Soviet Union has reached Vietnam and has boosted the drive for renovation in our country making it an irreversible one.

The press, particularly in the Capital and in Ho Chi Minh City, has exposed many negative phenomena and severely criticized cases of bureaucratism, irresponsibility, abuse of power, browbeating of the masses, undue prerogatives and privileges, theft of public property, corruption... Participating in this sweeping criticism and self-criticism in the press, besides professional journalists, are large masses of people. Culprits are indicated by name and brought to book. Major social problems related to the living conditions of workers, peasants, intellectuals, indeed of all labouring people, which were evaded in the past are now brought up for discussion. Social injustices formerly kept "in the shade" for fear of "damage to the prestige of the leadership" have been laid bare. The press has breathed a new spirit into social life, and many people, formerly indifferent to what it said, now closely follow its struggle against negative phenomena.

The regular appearance since 24 May, 1987 of a series of articles entitled: "Things to be done immediately" and signed NVL published on the *Nhan Dan* daily, then propagated by other mass media, have given the press a shot in the arm. At a meeting with voters before the September elections to the National Assembly Party General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh was asked: "Are NVL your own initials?". He replied: "As far as I know, they are the initials of the words: Speak and Act (Nói và Làm).* This answer was greeted with good-humoured approval. Although one cannot as yet be certain who NVL is, one cannot but feel concerned about a short article of his appearing in the *Nhan Dan* daily of 11 July 1987, in which he said that "some people have counselled me to show restraint in denouncing negative phenomena in the press", but that he could not accept this piece of advice because it contravenes his convictions. This means that in the Party itself, while the absolute majority of members want renovation, there remain conservative and inert elements who consciously or unconsciously try to hinder it.

The directive of the Party Secretariat points out:

"A number of leaders in some provinces and departments have not yet directed the media onto the

* i.e. match words with deeds (Ed.)

key issues. They don't know yet how to wield the press as a sharp weapon against negative phenomena. Instead of supporting it, they have hesitated, and have even impeded in one way or another, public exposure of negative behaviour. There has been delay in investigating the facts, solving cases, and informing the public through the press. Proper lessons have not yet been drawn from the cases dealt with."

Of late the Vietnamese press has undergone vigorous changes. The situation is encouraging. However, as the directive observes, "in a number of cases the media have failed to check the facts and to assess their effect on the public before publication; there have been untrue reports; for some articles the writer's motive has not been pure. The struggle against negative phenomena happening in press circles themselves has not been adequate; a sense of responsibility and discipline in writing against negative phenomena has not seriously prevailed."

Appraising both the positive results and the shortcomings of the press in the struggle against negative phenomena, the Party Secretariat holds that its actions are basically correct and follow the direction charted by the Sixth Party Congress. It calls for reinforcing Party leadership over the press so as to boost this sweeping drive and allow the media to efficiently participate in the campaign to purify and raise the combativeness of Party organizations, to purify and raise the managerial efficiency of the State apparatus, to make social relations wholesome and enforce social justice. The Party Secretariat gives the following guideline: "First public criticism in the press should concentrate on bureaucratism, irresponsibility, failure to observe Party and State policies, disturbance of order and discipline, serious waste; browbeating of the masses, abuse of power, arbitrariness, illegal arrest, bullying of one's critics; corruption in every form. It should publicly condemn degraded and degenerate elements, who misuse their powers to commit serious illegal deeds. It should expose and condemn tax-evaders, counterfeiters, profiteers, smugglers, who disrupt the market, worsen the people's living conditions and harm the economy."

At the same time, the Party Secretariat stresses: "Public criticism in the media should be true in substance and accurate in detail... Journalists should be inspired by correct and pure motives, respect for truth, and adopt a scientific method of work. They should carefully study every case and listen to many informants... Party discipline and State law should be enforced against those critics in the media who are motivated by personal discontent or a spirit of revenge, who indulge in slander or misuse criticism to stir up social disturbances; who seek to smear the regime and set public opinion against it. When realizing that their criticism is groundless journalists should withdraw it and engage in severe self-criticism in the media. The media must publish the views of individuals or organizations they have criticized."

The struggle against negative phenomena in the mass media is held to be the common responsibility of the Party and the State, of the entire society and not of the press alone. By the same token, public criticism in the press is held to be the right of all citizens with regard to all Party and State bodies, mass organizations and social organizations, all departments, all levels of authority, all localities, all cadres, for their failings. The Party Secretariat demands that "while struggling against negative phenomena, the press should not betray Party and State secrets", especially in national defence, security, economy, and foreign affairs... At the same time, it requires that "offices, organizations, economic units and social organizations should not unduly invoke the need to keep secrets in order to prevent the press from fulfilling its function of providing information." According to the directive, "offices, organizations criticized in the media must answer these criticisms within a few months. In the case of complicated affairs which need time to unravel, causes for the delay in answering the media should be made known. But in any event there should be satisfactory answers within a reasonable time.

The struggle to renovate Party life and social life in Vietnam is going through a critical time. Conservative forces in Party and State bodies have shown great inertia, in certain cases brazenly impeding the advance of the revolution in this new stage. In many cases journalists and their informants have met with trouble. Hence this emphasis in the directive of the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee: "It is forbidden to bully critics, to take revenge on journalists or members of the public who have published criticisms in the mass media. Party committees and organizations should take measures to protect journalists who vigorously struggle against negative phenomena. If the victim of reprisals is a member of the Vietnam Journalists' Association, the latter may ask the responsible and competent organs to bring up the matter before public opinion and to deal properly with the wrongdoer. The Association should be consolidated in order to be able to satisfactorily fulfil its task in the new situation."

The directive of the Party Secretariat on press work is a political document of great significance. On the one hand it affirms the role of the mass media as a guide for public opinion. On the other it reasserts the responsibility of the press and all users of the mass media in the struggle to repel the old and pave the way for the new. The essential point is that it sets Party committees and organizations the task of leading the press into a more effective struggle against negative phenomena. In other words, it aims at raising the effectiveness of the press in the struggle to democratize every aspect of life in the country — an arduous and delicate struggle at present.

The revolutionary State of Vietnam already has promulgated a law on the press and many regulations related to its organization and activity. However, many of these rules, drawn up in war time, are no longer suitable. Under the guidance of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Information is diligently elaborating a new press law to be submitted to the National Assembly. That is why the directive on the press issued by the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee has been greeted as meeting an urgent necessity, especially when it has been followed by a resolution of the Political Bureau launching a campaign to purify the Party and the State apparatus and to bring about wholesome social relations. ●

PRESERVING...

(Continued from page 7)

committees at all levels must have a detailed and accurate view of the morals of cadres and members under their authority. They must correctly assess the facts, detect and punish all serious offences. Special attention should be reserved for those in responsible positions, including high-ranking cadres; those in direct control of materials, equipment, goods, money, labour; those in charge of organisational and personnel... Nobody is to be allowed to stay outside the purview of the law.

[...]

Organs of dictatorship must urgently examine and investigate the activities of and mete out due punishment to degenerate elements, to the ringleaders of those engaged in illicit trading, theft of socialist property, speculation and smuggling, who have caused serious damage to the finances and economy of our country. They are not in very large number but they have coalesced into colonies of parasites which are biting into the body of our State and our society, causing very extensive damage. They will never recognize their crimes unless they are confronted with undeniable evidence adduced by the investigative agencies. They live in extravagance and luxury, openly challenging public opinion and the law. Their usual method is to buy over higher-level cadres, corrupt lower-level cadres, collude with degenerate elements in State organs and with illicit traders, and may even serve the schemes of the enemy who are seeking to sabotage our economy. They have become to all intents and purposes dangerous elements opposed to the State and the people. They are the enemy of socialism, whether they have been detected or not. Each locality and each branch of activity should immediately bring to trial a number of selected cases and keep the public well informed. We should closely combine discoveries and denunciations by the masses, and the mass media with thorough investigations by law-enforcement agencies. We should closely combine the campaign to purify the Party organisations and the State apparatus with the struggle against negative phenomena in society at large.

At the same time, we must guard against any attempt by the enemy to take advantage of our fight against negative phenomena to intensify their sabotage activities, and must crush their wicked machinations in time.

[...]

We must combine the struggle within the Party and State organs with giving encouragement to the masses to join in the building of the Party and the State apparatus. We must encourage them to criticize Party cadres and members and State employees, to unmask and denounce opportunistic and degenerate element. At the same time, we must supervise the redress of the errors and mistakes by Party cadres and members and State employees, and make suggestions to the Party organisations concerned on the education and management of their members. *Here the press and the mass media in general have a very important role to play. The press is the voice of the Party and at the same time the voice of the masses. It greatly contributes to the creation of public opinion.*

RESOLUTION...

(Continued from page 5)

guilty of serious errors and mistakes, depending on the nature and seriousness of their errors and mistakes. With regard to Party members whose political standards are too low and who do not have the confidence of the masses, we should, by taking the proper measures in a continuous process, get them out of the Party.

In the course of the campaign, we should involve cadres and Party members in the struggle for the implementation of the Party resolution and against negative phenomena, thereby educating and tempering them. We should commend zealous people, promote those who evince good moral qualities, competence, dynamism and creativeness, and who accomplish their tasks well; we should admit well-qualified people to Party membership.

2. To strengthen Party organizations, the State apparatus, and mass organizations in accordance with this spirit: to renovate our thinking, first of all our economic thinking; renovate our organizations and cadres, our style of work, thereby increasing the fighting strength and effectiveness of all organizations. We should carefully plan our cadre work, first of all strengthen the body of key cadres at all levels and in all branches, from the centre to the grassroots. We should carefully train and educate cadres and Party members. Special attention should be given to consolidating grassroots organizations. We should strengthen the Party's unity in politics, ideology and action, in the spirit of the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress and combat all manifestations of opportunism, sectarianism, regionalism and departmentalism.

3. To build a new way of life, one with an ideal, one that is healthy, that upholds loyalty, integrity and thrift, and according to which one lives from the fruits of one's labour, attends to collective interests, and defends public property; to oppose selfishness, deceit, parasitism, luxury, wastefulness and superstition.

We should realize social justice, everyone should be equal in duty and right. We should live and work in conformity with the law; everyone should be equal before the law; all Party members and cadres, whatever their position, should abide by the law and set good examples in this respect. We should oppose the use of protective "umbrellas" to shelter offenders against the law and Party discipline.

THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED OUTSIDE THE UN FRAMEWORK AND IN KAMPUCHEA

On October 14, the 42nd UN General Assembly passed the ASEAN-sponsored draft resolution on Kampuchea, the content of which is practically a mere repetition of former resolutions. The same adamant demand was made for a unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, and there was another obstinate attempt to oppose the People's Republic of Kampuchea and to groom the so-called "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" under the sway of the genocidal Pol Pot clique. Thus once again, the UN committed the mistake it had made over the past eight years, going further on the beaten track which has led to an impasse.

The first remark of the observers is that the vote does not reflect in any way the trend which has taken shape in the recent period both outside and inside the UN. This amounts to turning one's back on the actual changes in Southeast Asia and in the Kampuchean issue, changes which have created a possibility to break the eight-year-old deadlock. The 29 July Agreement in Ho Chi Minh City between Vietnam representing the Indochinese countries, and Indonesia representing ASEAN, the 27 August Statement of the People's Republic of Kampuchea on its policy of national reconciliation, the 28 September Statement of the People's Republic of Kampuchea favourably greeting the initiative of Prince Norodom Sihanouk on a meeting of the Kampuchean sides, the 8 October Statement of the People's Republic of Kampuchea on a five-point political settlement, and the announcement of another partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea next November, have been welcomed by broad sections of public opinion as initiatives paving the way to a reasonable and fair political solution for the Kampuchean issue. Right in the UN debate on Kampuchea, many representatives in their speeches and the UN Secretary-General in his report took note of the above-mentioned developments which are manifestations of a general trend to push up the dialogues which have been and are being arranged between the Kampuchean parties as well as between the Indochinese countries and ASEAN.

It is to be regretted that with the erroneous resolution it has just passed, the UN has shown a reprehensible partiality. It has sided with one party, and thus missed an opportunity to promote the great role it could have played in peacefully settling the Kampuchean issue and bringing about peace and stability in Southeast Asia. We understand that for one reason or another, several countries have voted in a direction inconsistent with the situation in Kampuchea, and with their own wishes.

The situation in Kampuchea, and more generally in Southeast Asia as a whole, will not develop along the subjective trend of the vote.

Obviously the Kampuchean problem is being solved outside the UN framework and in Kampuchea. It will be solved between the antagonistic Kampuchean sides and between the countries concerned. Vietnam will withdraw all its volunteer troops from Kampuchea by 1990.

The settlement of the longest wars involving the greatest quantity of bombs in Southeast Asia over the past 40 years constitutes a lesson of history. That is the following: when the UN is unable to play its role, the problem will be solved outside its framework. Speaking in Belgrade on October 12, Norodom Sihanouk himself admitted that the situation in Kampuchea cannot be solved by a majority vote in international organizations, and that a settlement must be sought in dialogues and negotiations. ●

ANOTHER PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF VIETNAMESE ARMY VOLUNTEERS FROM KAMPUCHEA IN NOVEMBER 1987

Communiqué of the National Defence Ministry of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

VNA — *On 11 October 1987, the National Defence Ministry of Vietnam released the following communiqué:*

"In implementation of the declaration made at the Summit Conference of the three Indochinese countries held in Vientiane in February 1983, the Governments of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea have decided to have more Vietnamese army volunteers withdrawn from Kampuchea in 1987. This is to be the sixth partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers, and will involve combat groups Nos. 94 and 99.

Group 94 is composed of an infantry division, two brigades and some auxiliary troops.

Group 99 comprises two infantry brigades and some auxiliary troops.

The above combat groups will leave for home, travelling in different directions by land and by sea.

This sixth partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers will be carried out in November 1987, and foreign observers will be invited.

FORTY YEARS AGO THE FRENCH EXPEDITIONARY CORPS ATTACKED VIET BAC

TRAN CONG TUONG

The world knows about Dien Bien Phu (1954) and the Fall of Saigon (1975). They were major events in the history of the struggle of Third-World peoples against colonialism, old and new. But few people are acquainted with the victorious battle won by the Vietnamese against the *Corps Expéditionaire Français en Extrême Orient* (CEFEO) in the autumn of 1947, which made possible the subsequent victories at Dien Bien Phu and in Saigon.

What would have happened if the French offensive on Viet Bac, the highland region where the young Ho Chi Minh Government and the bulk of its still scanty armed forces had taken refuge, had succeeded? Let us recall the facts.

Soon after the August Revolution of 1945, which put an end to eighty years of French colonial domination, the French attempted a reconquest of Vietnam. The country's revolutionary government had not been recognized by any government in the world. It had no liaison with the socialist countries, with neither the USSR nor China then not yet completely liberated. To equip its army, it could only rely on its own means, essentially weapons taken from the French and Japanese troops.

The French offensive, begun on 7 October 1947 and concluded on 19 December 1947 resulted in important French losses: more than 6,000 dead and wounded, out of a total of 15,000 troops fielded. The Vietnamese resistance, far from being crushed, started on a new advance which was to lead to Dien Bien Phu.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of this battle, we publish hereinbelow extracts from a brochure written in French and published in the maquis immediately after the French defeat, with the title *The French Offensive Against Viet Bac*. Its author, Tran Cong Tuong, a young barrister and political figure, had used captured French documents to compose those pages. *Editor.*

The bloody road

It led from Lang Son through Cao Bang to Bac Kan and was held by the Beaufré combat group

French convoys along this road were systematically attacked by Vietnamese regulars and guerillas, who turned to account the rugged terrain. On 20 October 1947, between Bac Kan and Cao Bang, a French column was shelled and suffered 30 casualties. Lieutenant Gaston Bailly, of the *Bataillon de chasse de la DBMP*, wrote to his wife:

"Our comrades fell into one of these traps and lost 31 lives, including two officers and three NCO. We face a sad balance-sheet. Over the past ten months, we have lost six officers, recently second-lieutenants Bertrand and Weber, and 41 NCO's and troops. Apart from that, there is no more war in Indochina."

(Letter dated 24 October 1947, to Mme Bailly, Haute-Vienne, France)

The Bac Kan — Cho Don stretch was also a bloody one. On 25 October 1947, motorized reinforcements for the Cho Don post, half destroyed by a Vietnamese night attack, were intercepted and attacked with mortar and grenade. Two lorries laden with troops plunged into a ravine. The rest were driven back to Bac Kan.

The Bac Kan — Cho Moi stretch was not spared. The following engagement was reported by the same lieutenant Bailly:

"The Commander went with the troops... But only a few kilometres from the camp, the enemy was lying in ambush and a brutal fight took place... Twenty-five of our men were wounded; ten were to die soon after... Facing an enemy superior in number and well acquainted with the terrain, the Commander decided to turn back."

(Letter of 28 October 1947 to Mme Bailly)

Warrant-officer Riallaut René confirmed the facts in a letter dated 30 October 1947 to his friend Cavasse: "It was the raids on Cho Moi which cost us the worst losses."

The situation in this sector was thus described by the paratrooper Conraux Serge of the *3e Cie BPM* in a letter dated 23 October 1947 to his brother Conraux Berat: "If it was fairly quiet at the beginning, it's not the same now. Things are getting pretty tough."

On 30 October, a 33-vehicle convoy was taking to Lang Son French paratroops who had seized the town of Cao Bang on 9 October. When it arrived at Bong Lau pass near That Khe, it was intercepted by Vietnamese troops equipped with mortars and automatic weapons. Twenty-seven lorries and armoured vehicles were destroyed, and more than 20 French troops killed or wounded.

French officials and newspapers in Hanoi, after hushing up the French defeats in Tuyen Quang, were forced this time to admit the violence of the attack and the importance of French losses.

Vietnamese fighters were active even inside the towns and cities.

"Here, rifle shots and submachine-gun bursts, or the muffled sound of mortars constitute the daily distraction."

(Letter dated 5 Nov. 1947 of Sergent Hervo Jean to Mme and M. Le Bail Robert, 58 boulevard Robespierre, Poissy, Seine-et-Oise)

"Things are not funny every day; one's buddies die. Yesterday evening, more of us got killed or wounded. One of them, a 19-year-old chap, had one of his legs amputated."

(Letter of Sergeant Hervo, 9 Nov. 1947)

"I won't hide the fact that the battalion has been badly mauled. We think of it all the time. Faced with implacable fate we can only keep our jaws tight together. The wounded who will be admitted to hospital will give you more details."

(Letter dated 20 November 1947 from Sergeant-major Tulip to Sergeant Colomb, *Base arrière SP 26860 BF 403)*

Those wounded certainly told, the sergeant that only the fighting will of the Vietnamese combatant was implacable.

On the very day when the Communal combat group completed its evacuation from Tuyen Quang and fled southward, the Beaufré group, reinforced with the *Bataillon de choc de la DBMP*, left Bac Kan, travelling in the same direction.

"Coming, men died; returning, others would."

The Communal group was split in two: one column sailed down the Clear River; the other took the Tuyen Quang — Thai Nguyen road, later turning south, heading for Vinh Yen.

At La Hoang (Tuyen Quang province) the river column came under violent attack and lost most of the staff of the *43e RIC*. On land, at Binh Ca, Son Duong and on the road to Vinh Yen, an important part of the column was destroyed.

The French troops lost their bearings both in the jungle and in their own confused thoughts.

"Just think, the hostilities may have ended for people in France, but not for us soldiers. We left Hanoi on foot, to return to it the same way. But we are not yet there. Coming, men died; returning, others would."

(Letter from Sergeant Bicard André, dated 24 Nov. 1947, to Mme et M. Pierre Bicard, Restaurant du Carrefour, Chaudon, Eure-et-Loire, France)

The Beaufré group arrived in Cho Chu on 25 November 1947, i.e. 41 days after the date set for Operation Cloclo, 14 October 1947.

Of course nobody came to its rescue, for having come to stay, it only came to leave.

Attacked at Quang Nap where it lost over 100 dead and 50 wounded, again set on at Dinh Doi, and at Quan Ong Lao, where it suffered more than 100 dead, running short of food and ammunition, it had to turn back north on 4 December 1947, heading for Cho Chu, which it had left on the 27th of the same month.

From retreat to rout

The moment was tragic. The retreat became more and more a rout. The problem for the French Command was to save the prestige of the French army by saving the scattered débris of the Communal and Beaufré groups.

On 20 November, while the units of the Communal group were still wandering around Son Duong and the Beaufré group was in a tight corner in Quang Nap, two French paratroop battalions were dropped

on Vu Nhai, Trang Xa and other localities of Thai Nguyen, where the Beaufré group was to pass in its march toward Hanoi. At the same time, another infantry regiment under the command of Colonel Giraud, starting from the *Pont des Rapides* and Pha Lai, was rushed to Bac Ninh, Phu Lang Thuong and Yen The.

In order to disengage Beaufré from the Quang Nap — Phu Minh corridor where he was encircled, a paratroop company was dropped on Phu Minh on 31 November: as soon as it landed it suffered 12 dead and about 20 wounded. Having received some reinforcements and supplies, Beaufré set out in the direction of Dai Tu.

On its way from Phu Minh to Dai Tu, the column was mercilessly pursued by Vietnamese troops and suffered three serious defeats, at Doc Lap (60 dead and wounded), Ban Ngoai (100 dead and wounded) and Yen Gia (50 dead and wounded).

Again set on at Phuc Linh, it suffered 70 more casualties.

In Trang Xa and Vu Nhai, the French paratroopers, after suffering heavy losses, had to turn back and rejoin Beaufré in Thai Nguyen.

The lamentable column reached the *Pont des Rapides* on 23 December 1947 after suffering 200 more casualties in Phu Lo and Phu Kien.

Vietnamese troops gradually reoccupied many localities in Viet Bac and the uplands: Cho Ra, Cho Don, Cho Moi, Cho Chu, Chiem Hoa, Tuyen Quang, Binh Ca, Son Duong, Vinh Yen, Viet Tri, Phuc Yen, Vu Nhai, Trang Xa, Dai Tu, Thai Nguyen, Nha Nam, Bac Ninh, Bac Giang, Dap Cau, etc.

Near Bac Ninh, another battle cost Colonel Giraud, whose column was returning to its starting-point, more than 200 casualties.

In the west, in order to come to the rescue of the Communal group, the French High Command dispatched one regiment from Hoa Binh. It was attacked at Thu Cuc, where it lost more than 100 men, plus 200 Thai auxiliary troops, who crossed over to the Vietnamese side with arms and baggage. Again attacked at Tu Vu, it lost 100 more men before rejoining the Communal group which, for its part, had suffered serious losses in Lien Son and Phan Luong.

In those battles, the Vietnamese side used weapons captured from the French.

"I am worried. We don't progress... How shall we return?" (Letter from Sergeant Francis Albert, SP 71971, BPM 403, written in Bac Kan on 20 Nov. 1947)

Here is how they returned. In the east, they made 150 kilometres in 30 days, i.e. 5 km per 24 hours on an average; in the west, the other column suffered heavy casualties.

But they took their revenge, by setting afire 540 houses in Vinh Yen, 715 in Phuc Yen, 1,501 in Thai Nguyen, etc., and by raping and killing thousands of women, disembowelling and burning alive hundreds of children.

It was such a demontration of cowardly barbarity that Lieutenant Marcel Fournier of the *Bataillon de choc de la DBMP* exclaimed that he "had been appointed protector of widows and orphans but was not indeed their defender."

The Treacherousness of the Highlands

While the Beaufré and Communal groups withdrew toward Hanoi, the Vietnamese troops continued to attack French convoys on the Bac Kan — Cao Bang — Lang Son road, inflicting severe losses on them.

Here is the official French account of those defeats:

Northern Sector C.P. 31 December 1947

3rd Bureau
No. 399/BMS

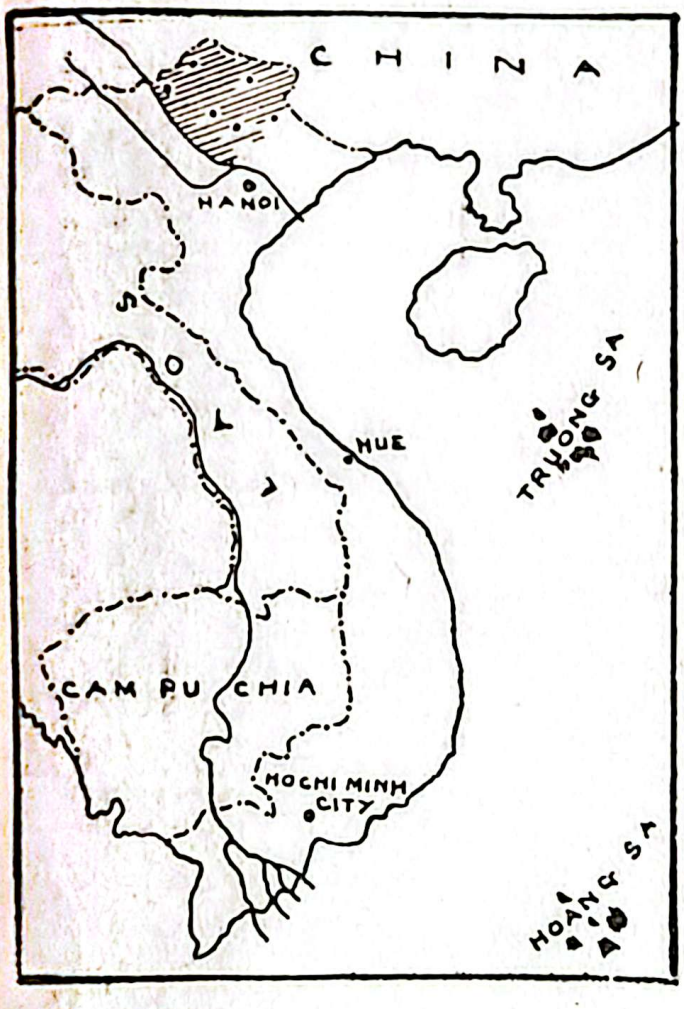
CONFIDENTIAL

MONTHLY REPORT

on the situation in the Northern Sector
(as of 1 January 1948)

(...) The 1/1 RIC is going to disappear, to be distributed among several formations. Those cadres do not hide their bitterness over this measure. After long and costly fights in Cochinchina, after painful weeks in the Northern Sector, this battalion has lost four officers in a fortnight (Lieutenant Donnat, killed in Phu Tong Hoa; Captain David, wounded in Phu Tong Hoa; Lieutenant Delcharde, wounded in Na Phac, Captain Vigneau, wounded in Bac Kan)

The enemy has reinforced his disposition and increased his pressure on our posts and communications. Several important actions have been recorded which have shown his courage and aggressiveness, and his resolve to force us to leave the country. His operations have been well prepared and well executed.



VIETBAC

Those units have conducted relentless guerilla war on our communications, occupying roads and laying ambushes. Besides, they are in immediate contact with our garrisons, which they continuously harass.

Bac Kan has been the object of night probes; the enemy has repeatedly tried to penetrate its defences... On the night of 26 December 1947, an enemy battalion attacked the central part, causing us some losses (one officer and nine men wounded).

Na Phac has also been subjected to several nightly probing attacks... Our total losses have amounted to 36 dead and 42 wounded.

Lastly two ambushes have been laid on the Deo Giang pass. The first (6 December) cost us 26 dead and 15 wounded; the second (14 December) 12 dead and 8 wounded.

In Nuoc Hai and Nguyen Binh the former Cao Bang regiment is operating. It is very well equipped. The presence has also been reported of a commando unit equipped with machine guns, automatic rifles, and mortars. It is specially in charge of attacking our convoys.

The Khuoi Sao post has been attacked, together with our convoys and security units, on several occasions. The costs for us have been 25 dead and 12 wounded.

In Ang Lai and Deo Ma Phuc, the RI 139 has been continuously cut and our detachments attacked, including the post on Deo Ma Phuc.

An operation had been announced by the enemy to mark the anniversary of 19 December (*the start of the nationwide war of resistance*, Ed.) and the approach of Christmas... The first attack took place on 23 December on Highway RC 4, between Dong Khe and Cao Bang, 18 km south of this town. An ambush had been prepared over 800 metres. The enemy had light mountain artillery, bazookas, and many automatic weapons, among them a 12.7 mm-caliber machine gun, as well as grenades, which were hurled at us either one by one or in clusters fastened to bamboo sticks... An Algerian company was unfortunately fired upon while riding in lorries to their positions, suffering severe losses...

The second attack happened on the night of 26-28, December in That Khe, where I had just arrived for an operation on Poma on the 28th. There had certainly been indiscretions for during the night my CP was attacked with grenades supported by firepower (18 wounded, including Captain Tare, out of about 30 people). Besides, the enemy concentrated 2,000 troops in Poma on the 28th when the operation was to take place.

In sum, the enemy has given evidence of solid combat capabilities.

(...)

Unpleasant as the facts are, one must recognize that the enemy has kept the initiative of operations during December. He has attacked us everywhere, along roads and at our posts, relentlessly...

Conclusion: December has been a very active month on the part of the enemy. We have suffered grievous losses, particularly with regard to officers (one killed, 8 wounded).

Signed: CARBONEL
Lieutenant-Colonel Carbonel
Commanding the Northern Sector

NEW PROGRESS IN DISARMAMENT

The Soviet-American agreement at foreign ministerial level reached in Washington on 18 September 1987 is a significant landmark on the path to complete and integral disarmament which is being aspired after by progressive mankind.

Following seven years of not-so-easy negotiations in Geneva since the fall of 1980 between the representatives of the two biggest nuclear powers, the two sides have now agreed in principle on a treaty regarding the elimination of all medium- and short-range missiles on their respective territories. They have also agreed to hold a summit meeting at the end of this year to sign this treaty and consider bilateral and other international relations.

The formal signing of a Soviet-American treaty on this issue (complete elimination of medium- and short-range missiles) would be the first agreement between the Soviet and American sides on the complete elimination of a system of nuclear weapons.

This is a success of the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries which are waging a persevering struggle for disarmament, against the arms race, and against the danger of a nuclear war. It is also a success of the forces of revolution and peace in Europe and around the world, which have year after year struggled against the deployment of new-type medium-range weapons and the US nuclear arms race. The complete elimination of the system of medium-range nuclear weapons will be an important measure to reduce the danger of nuclear war in this strategic region, thereby contributing to the maintenance and consolidation of peace in Europe, Asia and around the world. This treaty, once signed, and the new Soviet-US summit, are likely to open new prospects for the settlement of burning problems of concern for the whole mankind, such as the reduction and eventual complete elimination of offensive strategic weapons and the elimination of other mass destruction weapons including chemical weapons.

The Soviet-US agreement to conduct before 1 December 1987 talks on the banning of nuclear tests is also a significant development. It is common knowledge that these tests are aimed at experimenting new types of weapons with higher destructive power. A ban on such tests would be an important measure to prevent the modernisation of nuclear weapons and eventually to eliminate them altogether.

A question arises: Will the warmongering forces in the United States and other Western countries create new obstacles? The Reagan administration is obdurately clinging to its dangerous "Star War" plan while the bellicose forces in NATO are bent on maintaining nuclear arms. The struggle for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons will remain a bitter and complex one. This demands that the forces of revolution and peace in the world continue to show high vigilance, enhance solidarity, and step up the struggle to compel the United States to respect their commitments.

AN ILL-ADVISED DECISION

A recommendation passed by the US Senate on 29 September last requested Tokyo to prevail upon Japanese businessmen to stop economic relations with Vietnam because of "Hanoi's continued occupation of Kampuchea."

First of all, it should be affirmed that this is a crude intervention in other countries' affairs. It utterly runs counter to the general trend of the times namely dialogue, peaceful coexistence, stronger economic ties between countries with different socio-political systems on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

It is undeniable that in the present-day world, many countries and groups of countries are entertaining economic relations in spite of political disagreements and contradictionss. This is an objective requirement and need of the economy of each country and each group of countries. As can be seen, the economic ties between East European socialist countries and EEC and ASEAN countries, between the Soviet Union and the US, have been developing in the interest of both sides. The policy of violence, including violence in economy, is inadmissible in international relations.

Vietnam has economic relations with many countries in the world, a number of which outside the socialist community. It advocates continued development and expansion of economic relations with other countries irrespective of social system and political viewpoint, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Over the recent years, imperialist and reactionary forces have joined hands to carry out a policy of economic blockade in an attempt "to bleed" Vietnam with a view first and foremost to compelling it to give up its correct and justice-radiating stand in helping the Kampuchean people build and defend their country. However, reality has shown that their wicked schemes have failed. Broad sections of public opinion and business circles in many countries are urging their governments to abandon the policy of economic blockade, and to strengthen trade ties with Vietnam, with the three Indochinese countries, in the actual interest of their peoples.

The above-mentioned action of Washington with Tokyo is a new, undeniable evidence of its policy of continued hostility to Vietnam, preventing a normalization of relations between this country and the US. This policy has been strongly criticized by broad sections of public opinion and by US political circles. In the present international context, to link political disagreement to economic relations and consider economic exchanges an instrument of political pressure is a short-sighted act, an obstacle to dialogue for the settlement of pending problems between Vietnam and the US.

Contact, dialogue, co-operation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit have become the most correct and most suitable course of action in present-day international relations.

Days of Czechoslovak Culture in Vietnam (25 September 6 October 1987)

The cultural bridge of friendship

Thirty-seven years ago, in the thick of the Vietnamese people's war of resistance against the French colonialists, on 2 February 1950 the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and officially established diplomatic relations with it.

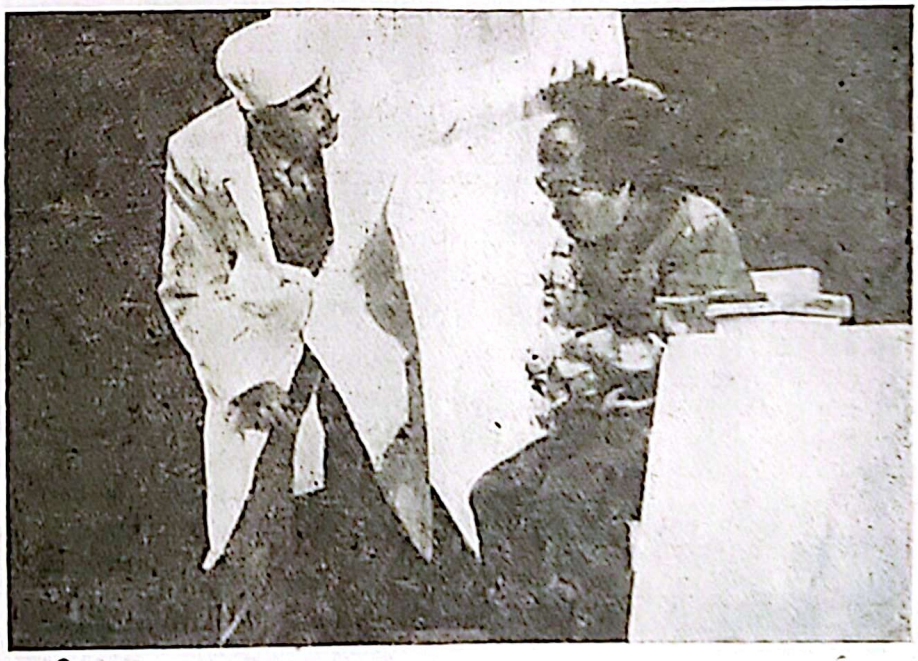
Since that historic day, Czechoslovakia and Vietnam have established relations in many fields. Their ties have grown ever closer and more and more comprehensive. In the cultural field in particular, Vietnam has received precious help from Czechoslovakia.

Many Vietnamese cultural workers have been trained in Czechoslovakia or at home with Czechoslovak assistance. Czechoslovakia has also supplied Vietnam with technical equipment and materials to produce gramophone records, stage marionette shows, and equip its cinema industry. A number of cultural projects such as the Mirror House in Lenin park (Hanoi), the Pioneers' Cultural Palace (Hanoi), the Workers' Cultural House (Haiphong) have been built with Czechoslovak aid.

Vietnam and Czechoslovakia have exchanged books, newspapers and cultural materials. Each country has organized exhibitions on various subjects in the other. The collection of President Ho Chi Minh's poems *Prison Diary* and the novel in verse *Kieu* by Nguyen Du, a masterpiece of our classical literature (early 19th century) have been translated in Czechoslovakia. Conversely, a number of Czechoslovak literary works — novels, poems, essays, plays — have been presented to Vietnamese readers. Especially J. Fucik's work *Written under the Gallows* has been translated into Vietnamese and reprinted many times.

Performances by artistes and art troupes in each other's countries have left their audiences with deep impressions. The play *White Disease* by Karel Capek performed in Hanoi recently by the Vietnam Dramatic Company attracted great interest

(Continued on page 20)



— *Tran Van Phac, Minister of Culture, presenting flowers to the Czechoslovak Art Troupe on the opening night.*

— *A scene in the play* White Disease *performed by the Vietnam Dramatic Company.*

Photos: VAN HIEN

A HIGHLAND PROVINCE VICTORIOUSLY FIGHTING POVERTY AND BACKWARDNESS

Gia Lai — Kontum province lies on a fertile plateau in the north of the Central Highlands. It covers about 26,000 square kilometres, including more than 1.5 million hectares of forestland and nearly 700,000 hectares of farmland.

People have settled in areas where there is enough water and the climate is favourable to animals and plants, industrial crops in particular.

However, those favourable conditions were offset by historical and social factors which until liberation kept the nearly half a million people here (among them more than 300,000 members of various ethnic minorities) in poverty and backwardness. At the time of liberation in 1975, the province did not have a single material-technical base. Its greatest socio-economic difficulties lay in the fact that most of the members of national minorities were illiterate and leading a nomadic life. Those who had settled to sedentary farming were practising an autarkic economy.

Feudal and pre-feudal customs held sway. Superstitions were rampant. Hunger and disease weighed heavily upon most of the national minorities.

Solving the Food Problem

After liberation, the revolutionary administration began the battle against hunger. With assistance from the central administration and other provinces, the people buckled down to reclaiming waste land, putting fallow land under cultivation, and building water-conservancy works. Within five years, more than 63,000 hectares of land were reclaimed, bringing the sown area from 17,000 hectares in 1975 to 80,000 in 1980. Now, the figure has reached 150,000 hectares, including tens of thousands of hectares under two wet-rice crops a year. In the first five years, the province erected 47 medium-sized irrigation works and hundreds of small ones. The figures have now run to 150 and over 1,000 respectively. Hunger was checked by the late seventies and this was the greatest achievement of the province.

Per capita food availability is now more than 300 kg a year. Gia Lai — Kontum grows enough rice for itself and can even make deliveries to the State. While expanding the cultivated area, the peasants have begun practising intensive farming. Of course, it has not been easy to bring agricultural science and technique to the national minorities, but the increased yields have shown great persuasive powers. Many co-operatives and production collectives have made big steps forward in farming technique, from ploughing and harrowing to seed-selection and plant protection. Many have obtained as much as 5 metric tons of paddy per hectare or more. In particular the farmers in Sa Thay district have been bringing in 8 - 9 tonnes of paddy per hectare for several years running.

Settling People to a Sedentary Life

The root cause of hunger and backwardness in this part of the country is the nomadic way of life. The administration at all levels in Gia Lai — Kontum has combined many measures in order to encourage the national minorities to adopt a sedentary life, e.g. the building of irrigation works and other material-technical bases. After ten years, over 230,000 people have been sedentarized and over 100,000 people have come from delta provinces to build new economic zones.

The headmaster of the Ksobe school in Gia Lai.

Photo: SY HUYNH

Only on the basis of sedentary farming can one transform the production relations. By now, 90 cooperatives and more than 1,000 production collectives have been organized, accounting for over 65% of the work force and nearly 60% of the cultivated area and grouping most of the production means.

Developing Industrial Crops and Stock-Breeding

Making the most of favourable conditions in land and climate, Gia Lai — Kontum has paid due attention to industrial crops and stock-breeding in all three sectors: State, collective and family. The province has more than 450,000 hectares of red basaltic soil suited to industrial crops like tea, coffee, rubber, cotton, sugar-cane, groundnuts, sesame, beans... At present, the province has 22 State farms growing industrial crops, with over 4,000 hectares under rubber, tea, coffee and tens of thousands of hectares under short-growth industrial crops.

Gia Lai — Kontum also has hundreds of thousands of hectares of grassland and about 25,000 hectares which can be grown to fodder plants. The herd of buffaloes and oxen amounts to roughly 150,000 head and is increasing by 7 - 8% on an average each year. The population has been encouraged to raise buffaloes, oxen, goats, horses as well as bees, fish and poultry in the family sector.

With the development of stock-breeding and industrial crops, monoculture of rice and autarkic farming have greatly receded.

Boosting Forest Exploitation

Gia Lai — Kontum has nearly 1.6 million hectares of forest and forestland. Albeit heavily devastated in the war years, forests are still a great source of wealth with about 130 million cubic metres of timber reserves, about 500 vegetal species and one hundred genera, including many kinds of rare and precious timber. Many areas are primeval forests.

Gia Lai — Kontum is one of the provinces with the greatest resources in medicinal plants. Natural forests contain nearly 900 species yielding each year 2,000 - 3,000 tonnes of medicinal substances. The most valuable species are ginseng, *sa nhan* (Amomum xanthioides Wall), cinnamon, *ha thu o* (Polygonum multiflorum Thumb), cinchona... The forests are the home of a thousand species of birds and over 300 species of mammals.

A plan to exploit the forests in a systematic and economical way was first mapped out by the provincial Party Committee in 1983. Urgent measures have been devised to check the destruction of forests through slash-and-burn farming. Forest protection and afforestation have become major tasks of the forestry service. The tempo of afforestation has increased year after year. Farming co-ops, production collectives, and State farms have been recently entrusted with the management and exploitation of forestland under contract. This has brought about positive results: denuded soil and bare hillslopes have been covered with green at a rapid tempo.

Spring in the Central Highlands.

Photo: TRAN CU

Building Industrial Bases and Communications and Transport Facilities

Starting from scratch, Gia Lai — Kontum has built thanks to State and local investment, more than 30 enterprises of medium and small sizes including an engineering plant capable of doing major repairs to 500 motor vehicles a year; enterprises producing building materials and ceramics, and a wood-processing factory. Together with over 100 handicraft cooperatives and production groups, they have turned out enough goods for local consumption and some for export.

Ensuring communications on a vast plateau with a sparse population is a special concern of the province. The communications service has repaired roads, upgraded them, built new ones as well as bridges. Transport means, both mechanized and rudimentary, have been developed.

Over the past ten years, Gia Lai — Kontum has opened tens of interprovincial and interdistrict roads totalling hundreds of kilometres, in addition to the building of over 7,000 kilometres of intercommunal roads.

Together with economic development, the cultural and spiritual life of the people, the national minorities in particular, has been gradually improved. Illiteracy has been liquidated, and social evils repelled. The medical network has extended down to the village level. Such epidemics as malaria, dysentery, cholera... which were real calamities in the past, have been curbed and will be totally checked in the not-too-distant future.

KSOR KROM

THE CULTURAL...

(Continued from page 17)

by its treatment of the burning topic of our times: the struggle against the threat of war.

The continuous activities of the Vietnamese Cultural House in Prague over the past 18 years and those of the Czechoslovak Cultural House in Ho Chi Minh City in recent years have contributed to widening cultural relations between the two countries. They constitute a permanent bridge of friendship between the two nations.

• • •

A special way of highlighting cultural relations between the two countries is the organization of "cultural days" of either country in the other. The Vietnamese cultural days, organized in Czechoslovakia in 1986, were warmly received by Czechoslovak art circles and popular audiences, who were introduced to *Cheo*, a traditional Vietnamese dramatic genre, to Vietnamese songs and dances, to some of the best Vietnamese films and to specimens of Vietnamese handicraft products.

This year, "Czechoslovak Cultural Days" were organized in Vietnam from 25 September to 6 October 1987.

The head of the Czechoslovak cultural delegation was Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Narozni. The delegation visited Hanoi in the North and Ho Chi Minh City in the South — the two largest urban centres of Vietnam, and gave a number of artistic performances by such renowned companies as the Pantomime Troupe under People's Artiste Ladislav Fianco, which has performed in 50 countries, attended 36 theatrical festivals and has been awarded many international prizes, and the Slovak Folk Art Troupe which has performed in 45 countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas.

During the Czechoslovak Cultural Days in Vietnam exhibitions were held about the Czechoslovak land and people. Handicraft articles and art objects, school equipment and other art items were shown at the Van Ho Exhibition Centre in Hanoi.

During a Czechoslovak film week held in Hanoi, over 20 Czechoslovak feature and documentary films were screened.

The Czechoslovak cultural days were a continuation of the 40-year-old all-sided cooperation between the SRV and the CSR and a vivid expression of their friendship.

QUOC HUNG

In furtherance of the policy on democratisation of the enterprise and in the spirit of the (draft) Resolution 306 of the CPV Political Bureau and Decision 76 of the SRV Council of Ministers on the full promotion of the workers' right to collective mastery in the selection of managers, a number of State-owned factories recently conducted elections to choose directors from among volunteer candidates.

In its July issue, *Vietnam Courier* reported on the elections of a new director at the Thanh Long paper mill in Hai Hung province. The following is the translation of a story carried in the weekly *Lao Dong* (Labour) on 30 July 1987 about the election of a new director at the Yen Phu electrical equipment repair factory in Hanoi, a component of the No. 1 Electricity Company under the Ministry of Energy.

• • •

It was a sultry day in late July. A hot westerly wind was blowing. The meeting hall was overcrowded and the air was suffocating. Nearly 700 personnel of the factory and almost 100 guests were crammed into this auditorium seating 500. Many had to stand along the walls or in corridors, nearly blocking the entrance doors. To elbow one's way out for a cool drink at the refreshment counter was no easy matter.

Beside the table reserved for the presidium there was another at which sat the candidates: Tran Cao Thao, the outgoing director, Pham Ba a deputy director of the Ninh Binh Power Plant, and Nguyen Ngoc Hy, a workshop manager at the Dong Anh Electrical Equipment Repair Factory.

It may be useful to say a few things about the Yen Phu Electrical Equipment Repair Factory. Set up in May 1986 through the merger of the old Yen Phu power station (now phased out) and the Thuong Dinh diesel electric plant, it is now in full reorganisation. Many problems are to be solved: poor and ill-assorted equipment, unstable employment and low wages, hence a feeling of insecurity among the

DEMOCRACY AT THE GRASSROOTS

workers. Each candidate for manager had had to conduct investigations into the material and psychological conditions before working out a production programme. At this meeting he was to present it to his electorate and answer questions as well.

So, the three candidates took turns presenting their programmes. This took hours. There were a lot of questions, interspersed by bursts of applause and also cries of disapproval. Questions and answers were attentively followed. Here are some, exchanged by Pham Ba, one of the candidates, and the workers.

Pham Ba presented his programme. After about 20 minutes, he concluded:

"What I said above cannot become reality overnight. This will take months and even years. However, one thing is certain: if we can agree on the orientation and objectives of our work, and if we act together — I mean the management, the workers, and the Party and other organisations — I believe our programme can be carried out. Now I am ready to answer questions."

The first to speak was Dang Dinh Thau, a driver in the transport section.

"Here are my questions: our factory already has a complete administrative apparatus; if you are elected will you keep it on? Or will you form a "team" of your own? In the interests of the workers and of the factory will you dare overstep antiquated regulations? Will you give us regular reports on the implementation of the programme or shall we face an "awsome silence"[1]?

Pham Ba: "In my programme I have set out two principles regarding the organisation of the future apparatus. On the one hand, we must ensure continuation and not make a clean sweep of the past. We won't start from scratch. On the other hand, as you well know, the law of elimination of the least capable is a natural law governing the existence, movement, and development of everything (Warm applause).

"As for the forming of a team of my own, yes, in a positive sense, we should have one. To put it in plain terms, we badly need a united, well-assorted and dynamic collective whose members are of one mind.

"Now, shall we overstep antiquated regulations? We should differentiate. We shall operate in conformity with the principles, regulations and regimes laid down by the State. Correct principles must absolutely be obeyed. However, in the present renovation, the director must be a dynamic person who dares to think and to act.

"Finally, I fully agree with you that every step in the implementation of the programme must be publicized through the diffusion of the plan for each period."

Bui Xuan Thuo (from the power generating section):

"What will be the wages of the workers in this latter half-year? Workers at the Ninh Binh power plant where you worked have lodged many complaints. As a deputy director of this plant, what do you have to say about it?"

Pham Ba: I have made clear in the receipts section of my programme that our revenues will depend exclusively on how much and how well we produce. Our living standards are a function of the factory's production. So, it is too early to reckon the amount each of us will earn in each period. But one thing is certain, we shall strive to stabilize production step by step, and the more we produce the higher our income will be. Under the yearly plan we still have to produce 12.1 million *dong* worth of goods and services. And under the contracts signed, we shall have to turn out 26.8 million *dong* more. You can estimate your incomes on this basis.

"As for the situation at the Ninh Binh Power Plant, all I can say is that I was neither among the defendants nor with the plaintiffs" (Applause).

Phan Luong (administrative section): "If elected will you build a house and move your family to Hanoi?"

Pham Ba: "I think that everyone of us has the legitimate wish to live with his family. If I am elected director, I wish that you would help me move my family here. That's a very normal and human wish." (Applause).

Trung (engineering workshop): "In your programme you stated that the director must be one who dares to think, to act and to take responsibility. Suppose you fail in your task, will you resign?"

Pham Ba: "Certainly. If the programme is not carried out, any director with the least sense of responsibility should resign. I would like to add, however, that for our new production plan to be fulfilled, not only the director but all the workers of the factory must display a high sense of responsibility. To work well is the common responsibility of all of us." (Warm applause).

The secret ballot gave the following result: Pham Ba got 430 out of a total of 666 votes. Immediately afterward, Minister of Energy Vu Ngoc Hai signed a decision naming him director of the factory.

NGUYEN AN DINH

1. A reference to an expression used by the columnist N.V.L. to describe the bureaucratic wall of silence before criticisms and queries by the public. *Ed.*

THE STORY OF ONE OF THE FIRST OPERA SINGERS IN VIETNAM

Thanh Dinh in Tchaikovski's opera Eugen Onegin.

Opera was a little-known musical genre in Vietnam. In the early sixties, the opera Eugen Onegin was successfully performed for the first time in Hanoi. One of the performers was Thanh Dinh. He was thus one of the first opera artistes in Vietnam. His tenor voice has since won praise in the country and abroad.

Now 50, Thanh Dinh was born into a peasant family living near the highland town of Yen Bai (capital of Hoang Lien Son province). At the tender age of 10, in the thick of the war against the French colonialists, he joined a local army unit as a runner. Later the quality of his voice was noted and he became a member of the Central Artistic Ensemble, which toured battlefronts in the North performing for the revolutionary troops. On 10 October 1954, the day of the liberation of Hanoi, he came to perform in the capital and in 1955 joined the Vietnamese delegation to the Fifth International Youth Festival held in Warsaw and later performed at the Tchaikovski conservatory in Moscow. Up to that day he had not had any formal musical training.

In 1956, he enrolled in a secondary level course of vocal music at the Vietnam Musical College. After graduation in 1959, he enrolled in the College, where he studied from 1961 to 1965. During his years at college, he played a part in Tchaikovski's opera Eugen Onegin (1961), in the Korean opera "The Call of Mountains and Forests" (1964) and in the first Vietnamese opera, "Co Sao", by Do Nhuan (1965).

In 1966, during the war of resistance to US aggression, Thanh Dinh left the North for the southern battlefield. He was seen on the Ho Chi Minh trail, in the liberated areas, in contested and also in enemy-occupied regions, singing for the liberation troops, shock youth, militia and guerilla units and the population, with guitar accompaniment by himself. He captivated the public with his beautiful voice. On 30 April 1975, with the liberation army he entered Saigon and gave performances there.

In 1978, Thanh Dinh began attending a three-year course in Bulgaria and won the third prize at an international contest organized by the Sofia conservatory. In 1981 he returned to Vietnam and worked with the Hanoi Opera and Ballet Theatre. In 1985 he played the part of Prince Lamadori in Puccini's Madame Butterfly, the première of which was performed at the Hanoi municipal theatre on 12 May 1985.

Thanh Dinh was honoured with the title "Outstanding Artist" on 27 January 1984.

THE DUY

Hue, the Ancient Imperial Capital

Hue,* the ancient imperial capital of Vietnam, is a city of palaces, pagodas, temples and royal tombs. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, the former director general of UNESCO, said after visiting it that Hue is a fine specimen of "urban poetry". If you wish to enjoy beauty in serenity, spend a few days in Hue amid its mossy citadel walls, the graceful roofs of its pagodas and temples, and the green foliage of its gardens.

Hue, where the royal House of Nguyen established its capital, was built along the banks of the Perfume River, thus named because it takes its rise in a hilly region with a thick vegetation of *thach xuong bồ*, a fragant shrub. It's a very pleasant way of visiting the city, watching it from a boat gliding down river. The compound of the Royal Citadel contains many palaces and mansions: Thai Hoa, the Audience Hall; Can Chanh, where the king worked; the royal gardens, lotus ponds, lakeside pavilions... Before the Dynatic Temple stand nine huge bronze urns, cast during the reign of Minh Mang (1820-1840). On them are carved figures of animals and plants representative of the flora and fauna of the country.

Sailing upstream some distance out of the city, one may visit the Royal Tombs, built amid a picturesque landscape of rolling hills. Thirteen Nguyen kings reigned and mausoleums were built to seven of them. Each royal tomb has its original traits: the Gia Long mausoleum is characterized by majesty of line and setting; the Minh Mang monument by ritual symmetry; the tomb of Tu Duc evokes the poetic bent of the deceased; that of Dong Khanh is gracefully arranged, while the Khai Dinh tomb features elaborate craftsmanship.

The Minh Mang mausoleum stands at the Bang Lang confluence. It was built between 1841 and 1843 amid hills and forests and comprises symmetrical structures on both sides of an axis running to the Perfume River. This ritual arrangement is evocative of the feudal order under a centralized monarchy.

The Tu Duc tomb has lyrical traits about it. The visitor may stroll on pine-clad hillsides, in gardens and orchards, along the banks of fragrant lotus ponds, or cross tiny graceful bridges leading on to little islets... Obviously, the architects had wanted to build for the king, not only an eternal resting-place, but also a serene environment for the pleasure of his romantic soul.

The Khai Dinh tomb is completely different. It is profusely decorated with murals and friezes of ceramic mosaic, which testify to skilful craftsmanship.

The Minh Mang mausoleum.

Photo: DU LICH

The Thien Mu pagoda is truly an emblem of Hue. It stands on a hillside with centenarian trees mirrored in the clear waters of the Perfum River. A seven-storeyed tower, 21.6 metres high, rises in front. The sound of the bell from Thien Mu is familiar to countless generations of Hue people.

Mount Ngu Binh is rightfully called the Royal Screen, standing some distance from the Royal Citadel. Other tourist spots include the Nam Giao, Altar to Heaven and Earth, where the king used to officiate each year; the Tiger Arena where tigers were pitted against elephants in savage combat for the entertainment of the king and his court; and the Thuan An beach on the coast.

Hue people are gentle-mannered and hospitable. Young women like to wear long flowing gowns of a light violet hue called Hue violet. Hue cuisine is famous for its delicacy and its elaborate presentation.

Ba Vu is a palace dance which is being studied and re-arranged by today's choreographers. You'll find it a typical item of ancient Vietnamese culture. Hue craftsmen are renowned for their skills and taste. In the souvenir shops you may buy articles of embroidery and lace, wood carvings, woollen carpets, etc. A typical Hue product is the traditional woman's conical hat made of paper-thin palm leaf: hold it against the light and between its transparent layers you may read a poem and see a landscape in silhouette.

Hue is listed in a well-known tourist guide published in Paris in 1950 and called "Wonders of the World".

NGUYEN THI LAM

For a trip to Hue
Please contact:

VIETNAM TOURISM
54 Nguyen Du Street, Hanoi
Tel: 35983-54074
Telex: 4269 Tourism VT
or the Vietnamese mission in your country.

* pronounced hûe

NEW VIETNAMESE RICE STRAINS ON LAO RICEFIELDS

Hat Saiphoong, a district in the rural suburbs of Vientiane, has come to the fore in the drive for agricultural development and particularly for the intensive culture of late autumn rice. Recently it has also been the standard-bearer in the planting of summer rice on a large scale thanks to the introduction of Vietnamese rice strains.

A few years ago Savangthon, who is in charge of the food program of the city, scoured the region together with Vietnamese experts to urge farmers to grow new rice strains, but with only poor results as the peasants were reluctant to try the new strains. They thought they might be difficult to grow and would yield only poor-quality rice. However in 1985, some cooperatives tried the CR-203 and 75-I rice strains and obtained high yields, and more and more farmers emulated them. Take Ban Cang for example: from two hectares in 1985, new strains were grown on over 20 hectares in the summer of 1986 yielding as much as the late autumn harvest, an unexpected result. This year Ban Cang raises these strains in all its ricefields.

The manager of the Ban Cang co-op, very active in spite of his 65 years, has signed a contract with the Salakham seed-selection farm for it to supply him with 75-I and CR-203 seeds. Now his cooperative not only supplies seeds to other co-ops but is also a pace-setter in intensive culture.

"The 75-I and CR-203 rice strains have been brought over from Vietnam, he said. "They bear long high-quality grains, and are easy to grow. By using only simple methods of intensive culture we have obtained high yields. In 1986, Ban Cang grew them on over 20 hectares and harvested 3.5 tonnes of rice per hectare. These new strains are there to stay. We are doing our best to obtain yields of 5 or 6 tonnes per hectare as many Vietnamese cooperatives have done."

The late autumn rice harvest at Ban Xooc.
Photo: VNA

Thanks to the planting of these new strains in summer and late autumn, Hatsaiphoong district has rapidly increased its rice production. The managers of the Salakham seed-selection farm let us know that there are in Laos 160 rice species including 60 local varieties. Their job is to select local high-yield strains and cross them with imported ones so as to obtain high-yield varieties suited to the soil, climate and farming conditions in Laos. The farm has selected pest-resistant autumn rice varieties yielding upward of 3.5 tonnes/ha and summer rice varieties yielding 4-5 tonnes/ha, Vietnamese summer rice strains are grown extensively in five suburban districts of Vientiane. Such cooperatives as Dong Phuxi and Tha Nalong have obtained the same good results as Ban Cang.

Lao managers and agronomists have sought to apply scientific and technical measures, particularly seed selection, on a large-scale. This problem has been gradually solved in practice. In seed selection for instance, the Salakham farm has organized a production process involving a number of agricultural cooperatives, while the Salakham farm produces seeds the cooperatives multiply them. Salakham

supplies the latter with selected seeds, fertilizers and technology and buys grain from them at mutually-agreed prices for distribution to other co-ops. In 1986, the Salakham farm signed contracts with seven cooperatives, supplied them with seeds, and bought from them eight tonnes of grain. This form of cooperation has expanded to other districts. Provided they observe the technical norms, the cooperatives obtain high-quality seeds, and the municipal authorities have worked out concrete policies to encourage them. The supply-and-marketing sections of agricultural cooperatives are efficient middlemen between the trading services, which buy up farm products and sell manufactured products to the farmers.

At the Salakham seed-selection farm and at the agricultural cooperatives I visited, our Lao friends lavished praise on the Vietnamese experts working there. Nguyen Van Hien, an expert in seed selection, taught genetics at the José Marty agricultural college in Hanoi. He has been working since the end of 1982 with the Salakham farm and is a correspondent for the UNO's FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization). Meeting him in the fields, we were pleasantly surprised by the fact that he spoke Lao fluently and behaved like a Lao. Lao farmers regard him as a friend and a teacher and like him for his simplicity of manner, modesty, and zeal at work. I remember that when a Vietnamese Party and government delegation headed by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong came to Vientiane to attend the Fourth Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, General Secretary Kaysone Phomvihane, speaking of the achievements of Lao agriculture over the last ten years, had warmly praised to work of Vietnamese experts who had come to help Laos to develop its agriculture. In particular, he cited the example of Le Cong Ta, who, working in Champassac province for the last ten years, has efficiently contributed to developing its agriculture and solving its food problem.

For many years, implementing the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Vietnam and Laos, a large number of Vietnamese specialists in crop cultivation, animal husbandry and water conservation have worked with Lao cadres in laboratories and in the fields to build material and technical bases for Lao agriculture and encourage Lao farmers to apply new farming technologies. Vientiane, a major rice-producing region of the country, has recorded substantial progress in intensive farming. Growing summer rice here is hard work, but large possibilities exist for making it the main rice crop of the year. The use of the new rice strains and the application of intensive culture on 6,000 hectares of rice-fields in the dry season will contribute to the rapid increase of food production in the province. The completion of agricultural zoning in Vientiane at the end of 1986 was the result of persevering cooperation between Vietnamese experts and their Lao friends. It will create favourable conditions for Vientiane to make steady headway in agricultural development.

XUAN NOI

The manager of the Von Kham State farm, studying newly test-planted rice strains.

Photo: VNA

VIETNAM COURIER

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• For "From Our Readers" we have already answered letters from N.I. Yakimchouk (USSR), A. Perdoa (Great Britain), John Fabbricante (Thailand), Larus Hafsteinsson (Iceland), Heinz Kronefeld (FRG), Peter Wagner (GDR), Victor Chitongo (Zimbabwe), Nicolai Gusev (USSR).

HRONOLOGY • CHRONOLOGY

(15 September — 14 October)

SEPTEMBER

15. The SRV Council of Ministers issues a Decision on the Practice of Strict Economy (See Panorama, page 2)

15 — 29. A high-ranking delegation of the National Patriotic Front of Afghanistan led by Noor Akbar Paiesh, its Vice-President and General Secretary, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

18. A CPV delegation led by Dao Duy Tung, alternate Political Bureau member and member of the Party Secretariat, concludes a friendship visit to Switzerland begun on 14 September 1987.

21. The CPV Secretariat issues a Directive on strengthening Party leadership with a view to a better use of the press in the struggle against negative phenomena.

21 — 30. An SRV National Assembly delegation led by Nguyen Thi Binh, head of its External Relations Committee, pays a friendship visit to Japan.

23. *Prague:* Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1988 between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia.

13 — 25. An SRV National Assembly delegation led by Dang Hoi Xuan, Minister of Public Health, attends the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference on Population and Development, held in Beijing.

23 Sept. — 8 Oct. A government delegation of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia led by Roman Narozni, Deputy Foreign Minister, attends the Days of Czechoslovak Culture in Vietnam, begun in Hanoi on 25 September.

25 Sept. — 5 Oct. Vietnam takes part in the Marseilles Fair. The 90 sq.m. stand of Vietnam, built by the Vietnam Diffusion Company, displays handicraft and art articles for export.

26. The Political Bureau of the CPV Central Committee issues a Resolution on the campaign to purify Party organizations and the State apparatus and raise their fighting strength and to make for healthy social relations.

29. The SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement expressing total support for the just stand and good-will attitude of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, as expounded in its 28 September 1987 statement.

30. Hanoi: Opening of the 21st session of the Vietnam — Czechoslovakia Sub-Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

30 Sept. — 4 Oct. Vietnam takes part for the first time in the 25th West Berlin International Fair. Its stand displays agricultural products, articles of clothing and traditional handicraft and art articles such as lacquerware, embroidery and lace articles, rattan furniture, woollen carpets, pottery, etc., which attract great attention.

OCTOBER

2 — 12. A delegation of the Finnish — Vietnamese Friendship Society led by its Vice-Chairman Esko Seppanen, member of the Finnish Parliament, visits Vietnam.

3. *Phnom Penh:* Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1988 between Vietnam and Kampuchea.

6 — 7. *Hanoi:* CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh has a cordial meeting with artists and cultural activists. In his speech he urges on them the importance of perseverance and courage in artistic creation in contribution to the struggle against negative phenomena, and in the effort to form the new socialist man and participate in the Party's campaign for renovation.

6 — 8. *Ulan Bator:* Holding of the sixth session of the Mongolia Vietnam Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

7 — 9. A Finnish Parliament delegation led by Markus Aaltonen, head of its External Relations Committee, visits Vietnam.

9. The SRV Government issues a statement expressing total support for the 8 Octobre 1987 statement by the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

9 — 17. A team of the Soviet Students' Sports Association, including 17 volley-ball and table-tennis players and boxers, visits Vietnam where friendship tournements will be held.

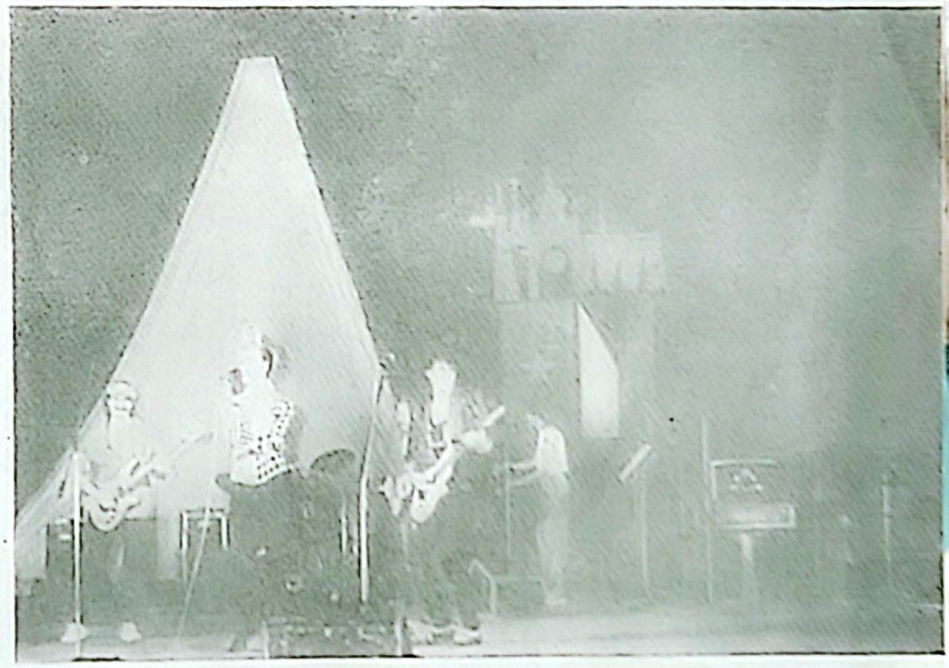
10. *Hanoi:* Opening of a Month of Friendship and Cooperation between the Trade Unions of Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

+ A Government delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic led by Butyn Sumyaa, member of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, Minister of Culture, attends the Days of Mongolian Culture in Vietnam begun in Hanoi on 13 October 1987.

13 — 14. *Moscow:* A Vietnamese delegation led by Vo Van Kiet, Political Bureau member of the CPV Central Committee and First Vice-Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers, attends the 43rd (Special) Conference of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

● *The Czechoslovak Art Troupe on Vietnamese stage.*

DAYS OF CZECHOSLOVAK CULTURE IN VIETNAM



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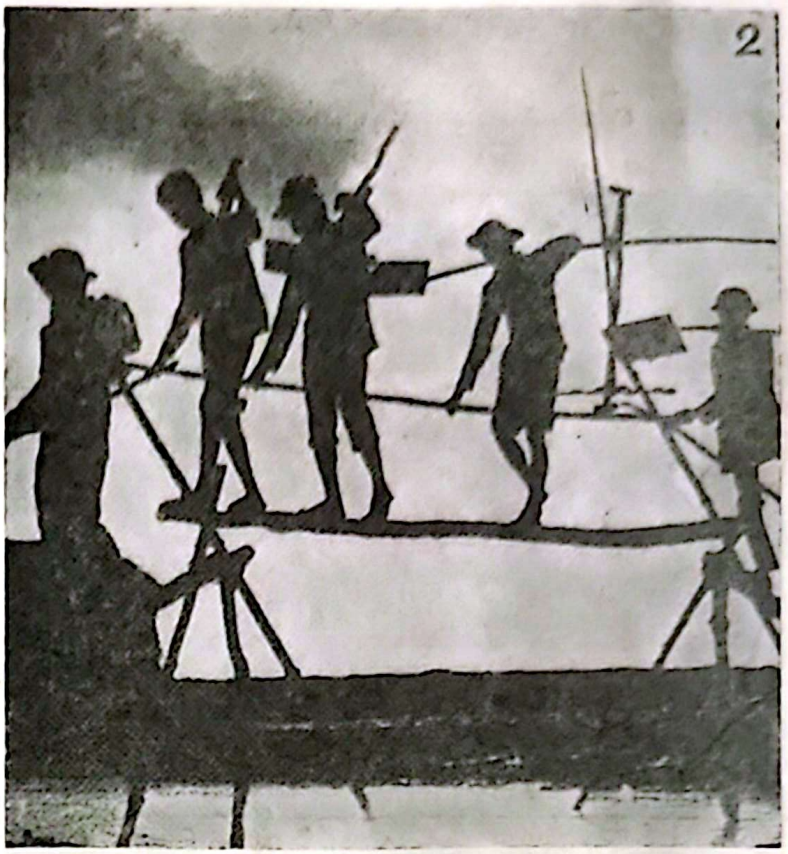

Vo An Khanh, 52, a photographer of 32 years standing, member of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Photographers' Association, is the author of many beautiful pictures of the Vietnamese landscapes and people.

1. *Crossing the Thi Tuong swamps. (1980)*

2. *Going to salt marshes. (1983)*

3. *Helping Grandma who can't see. (1984)*

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